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THE CASE OF THE People of England IN THEIR Present Circumstances CONSIDERED;

SHEWING,

How far they are, or are not Obliged

BY THE

Oath of Allegiance.

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THE CASE OF THE People of England IN THEIR Present Circumstances CONSIDERED, &c.

KING *James*, rightful Heir of the Crown, by the death of his Brother, enters into the full poſſeſſion, has all the Rights, Dues, and Prerogatives of a King of *England*, and all his Subjects are bound to him by their Oaths of Allegiance. He ſelects and chooſes out of his Subjects as many as he pleaſes. He forms them into a regular Army, maintains them, truſts, and depends upon them to preſerve and ſecure to himſelf all his Rights, and Intereſts. The reſt of his Subjects neither He, nor the Laws of the Land permit to take up Arms to oppoſe his Enemies without his Commiſſion: And ſome of them freely offering themſelves to raiſe Forces in his Service,

and for his Defence, he rejects, and will not Commission them, commands them to go home to live quietly there, and leave Him to conduct, and manage his own Affairs, and Interests.

He gives Just cause of War to a Neighbor Prince, by invading his Rights, by an Action generally presumed, and believed by all his Subjects, or at least by nine parts of ten of them, most base, against the Laws of Nature, Nations, and of this Land, against his own Crown, and Dignity, and against the plain, and most manifest interest of his Nobility and Commonalty, or the main Body of his People; and that on purpose to subvert the Laws, the Rights, the Religion of All, one onely Party, or Faction excepted; and thereby to give that Party power to ruine, and destroy all the rest; which too is a Party laid aside by Law, and declared, and made in all possible ways uncapable of being *trusted in the Government*, or of such Offices as He by vertue of *his Regal Power* is to execute by Ministers; and that because the designs, and interests of that Party have been found by the experience of *four preceding Reign's* to have been contrariant to the Crown and Dignity of the Kings of *England*, and against the plain Interest, and Rights of the People.

In this state of Affairs, the injured Neighbor Prince invades this Land, Declares that He is wronged, and desires that Justice may be done him: K. *James* calls together his Army, and goes out to oppose, and to Fight him: The Foreign Prince offers to refer the decision, and ultimate determination of the Controversie to K. *James*'s own Subjects in a Regular Lawful Parliament assembled, and desires that such a one might be Called. K. *James* will not do it, but trusts to his Soldiers, and will not trust to the Body of his People who only can speak their sense Legally in Parliament.

He is deserted of his Soldiers, They will not Fight against, but joyn themselves to the Foreign Prince, perhaps Judging in their private opinions his Cause right, and just. Upon this; K. *James* makes his Escape, flies to the Old Enemy of the English

Engliſh Nation, one who deſires nothing more than to deſtroy, and ruine the People; to change and ſubvert their Laws, and Religion; and by this eſertion, and Flight leaves his own Liege People in the hands, under the Power, and at the diſpoſal of that Foreign Prince.

In this State of Affairs it is matter of Conſideration, What particular perſons, who are under Oaths of Allegiance to K. *James*, by Vertue of thoſe Oaths are bound to do.

I. Here it is plain, that they are not bound to take up Arms and oppoſe that Prince under whoſe power they were, when K. *James* left them. Becauſe they are bound by the Law not to take up Arms, or raiſe Forces either for any Friend, or againſt any Enemy of the Kings, without his Commiſſion; They have no Commiſſion, and ſo cannot be bound to do this; for no man can be bound by a Legal Oath to do that for which the Law condemns them as highly Criminal, and adjudges them to the Gallows for ſo doing.

II. They are not bound to leave their Houſes, and Families, and follow K. *James*, and tender him their Services, becauſe they are not aſſured that He is able to maintain them, or willing to receive them; inasmuch as in their abſence another Invader may come, and ſeize upon the Country, and deſtroy their Families, and make their condition deplorable. And that muſt be preſumed to be as much againſt K *James*'s mind, as againſt their own. Beſides, He is now in the power of the Old Enemy of the Kings and People of *England*. And if great Numbers of the Engliſh ſhould go to K. *James* in *France*, the French King may be jealous of their deſigns, and take opportunity to deſtroy them; at beſt He may uſe them as well to fight His quarrells as K. *James*'s; as well againſt him, as for him. Beſides, it is notorious that He neither will, nor dares truſt any Number of Armed Proteſtants to be in his Country, for ſo ſmall a time as is neceſſary to fit them for any publick Service.

III. They are not bound by their Oaths of Allegiance to continue in the ſame ſtate wherein K. *James* left them. For

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at that time there was no Government, no Juſtice, no benefit of Law: They were no longer a People, but a confuſed multitude, every one did what he pleaſed, none could command, and none could obey; But the *Mobile*, the ſcum and Rabble of the Nation ruled All; (as K. *James* himſelf found by Lamentable experience:) Now the Oath of Allegiance cannot oblige Men to continue in this State, becauſe it was made on purpoſe to keep Men from ſuch a State, to ſecure Government, to ſupport Juſtice, and provide for the Execution of Law; for this end the King requires it to be taken, and to this end every ſingle Man upon occaſion takes it.

IV. As they are not bound to continue in that State, ſo they are not bound not to endeavour a deliverance from it, or to refuſe the moſt likely, and perhaps the onely poſſible way to get out of it; becauſe they are bound to ſeek their own preſervation, and do what in each Mans power lies, to ſecure the Common good of the Nation. If K. *James* by his own default, and ill conduct, gives occaſion for an Invaſion, and cannot oppoſe the force of the Invader, but runs away, and ſhifts for himſelf, and provides for his own ſafety, and ſo leaves his People, under the power of, and at the mercy of the Invader, and in ſuch a condition that they cannot lawfully fight againſt him, nor with reaſon fly from him, and whilſt they remain at home, they have neither Government, nor Juſtice, nor benefit of Law, but are obnoxious to the rage and fury of every Villain, and Cut-throat; in this Caſe, They cannot be bound by the Oath of Allegiance from complying with preſent neceſſities, and uſing all for poſſible means of their own preſervation at home, as well as the King provides for his, by flying abroad.

V. Since the taking of an Oath is a Voluntary act, which a Man may do or leave undone, the obligation of it can never be ſuppoſed to reach to things that neither are, nor can be in his power. If a Man ſwears to do any thing that is in it ſelf abſurd, againſt nature, or impoſſible, he ſins in making a raſh Oath, but is under no obligation of performance. We cannot

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by an Oath, oblige our ſelves never to eat, or drink, or ſleep, becauſe we are obliged to do theſe things by Nature; and by the ſame Nature we are obliged to ſeek for protection from Wrong, and Injury, to be ſafeguarded in Life and Limb, and to be defended in our juſt and true Rights. Theſe things are under the direction of Nature, and are ſo laid upon us by the original Frame and Make of our beings, that ſubſequent injunctions of Will to the contrary are void, and null; becauſe they are Violations of Nature, abſurd in themſelves, and morally impoſſible.

VI. From hence now follows one thing to be obſerved, that as we cannot oblige our ſelves totally to omit theſe, ſo we cannot oblige our ſelves to ſuſpend the doing of thoſe, at the Will and Pleaſure of another, ſo as to bind our ſelves not to do them, till we receive the Allowance and actual Conſent of another; becauſe that other may be ſo far diſtant from us that we cannot know his Pleaſure, or receive his Allowance at ſuch times when the demands of Nature are moſt extreamly preſſing upon us. We ſleep ſometimes whether we will or no; at other times we cannot ſleep, though our Wills are moſt deſirous of it. When a Blow is coming toward the Head, we lift up our Arms to fend it off from that principal Part without any perceptible act of the Will. Now if our own Wills have ſo litle Command over us in ſuch Acts as theſe, they cannot oblige us to ſuſpend the doing of them at the Will of another. It is to be obſerved further, that the Obligation to ſeek for Protection, to be ſafeguarded and defended, is moſt cloſely laid upon us, and more preſſing than any of the other, becauſe our Wills in this Caſe have no power over us, we muſt and cannot but will it, and that at every moment of time: We may oblige our ſelves not to eat, or drink, or ſleep for a certain ſpace of time, wherein we can reaſonably judge that the Neceſſities of Nature will not overbear us, and be too prevalent to be reſiſted by us: But we cannot oblige our ſelves not to endeavour Security, and to be ſafeguarded for any Period of time, becauſe we cannot know whether Extremity, or the moſt urgent Want may not require it the very next moment.

VII. Seeing

VII. Seeing we are obliged by Nature to desire to be safeguarded, and protected from Wrong and Violence, and no Act of our Will can oblige us not to endeavour after it for a certain Period of time; it must follow from thence, that if there be any words in the Oath of Allegiance, which may seem to speak, that particular Persons have thereby bound themselves to K. *James*; to be his Lieges, at his disposal, without regard to their own Protection, whether He protect them or no: and although by his own default he puts himself out of a Capacity of protecting them, so that they cannot see how or when He can be able to protect, and safeguard them; (as suppose He provokes a Neighbour-Prince to War against him, and is vanquished and runs away, and leaves them to the Mercy of such a Stranger; yet they will continue his Lieges at his disposal, without any Regards for, or expectations of Protection from him, whether He ever be able to protect them or no.) All such words as seem to speak such a Stipulation, must not be interpreted to that purpose; because it never was in their Power to contract upon such terms, inasmuch as they are bound by Nature antecedently to any Act of their Wills, to provide for Safety and Defence against Wrong and Violence.

VIII. If they are not bound to continue Lieges to K. *James*, and at his disposal, whether he does, or can, or is likely to give them Protection; then they are not bound not to contract, and enter into a new Stipulation with another, to become his Lieges in case *He* be able and willing to protect them. For seeing the Oath of Allegiance can reach no farther than Allegiance, or Ligeancy it self does; when Allegiance is no longer due, we are no longer under the Obligation of that Oath. Now Allegiance being nothing else but according to the known Definition *Vinculum arctius inter Subditum & Regem, utrosq; invicem connectens; hunc ad Protectionem & justum regimen, illos ad tributa & debitam subjectionem*: that is, *a close Bond between a King and a Subject obliging*

V. Spelmanni Gloss. Verb. Ligeantia: dicuntur igitur utriq; *Ligii*; Princeps nempe *Ligius* Dominus: Subditi verò populus *Ligius* & homines *Ligei*. Ibid pag. 448. Edit. 1626.

ing the one to give Protection, and the other to pay due Subjection: If a King breaks away from his People, and makes himself uncapable to give them Protection, the Bond that tyed them together is thereby broken, and they are no longer Lieges but at liberty to get Protection, where they can find it.

The only Objection against this, is, that possibly a People may contract with one to the detriment of another, perhaps with an Usurper, passing by the Heir who has a true, though depending Right. In Answer to which, it must be said, that the Heir's Right ought to be preserved, and his Protection is first to be sought, if he be able and willing to do it; But if he be neither able, nor willing, or if he be only not willing, the People must not be bereft of their Protection, and want Government and Justice, because a certain Man has no Will that they should have it. But in Case he be willing, he must openly demand it, and put in his claim for it, or some in his behalf, because the necessities of Government and Protection are so pressing, that particular Persons cannot remain long without it. And then it must be clear, and manifest that he is the Heir. If there be any doubt of his Title, he must make it out to full Satisfaction.

IX. If they can contract with another, they may do it as to become their King, or as Regent; for if they be no longer Lieges, they are free to bind themselves either faster or looser, by Oath, or by Promise, either to a King or Regent. For if the Power be once in him, he is King whether he has the Name or no; and he that has not the Regal Power, is not King. It is a Complement not to give the Title to another, but no Duty; it is expediency and the good of the Community that only can give a Rule in that point: For it is not the Name nor yet the descending Title from Ancestors that gives the true Value and Estimate of a King; for the Name is equivocal, and in several Countries signifies a very different state of Power, and the descending Title comes to him, just as other Titles to Estates come to other Men. That which gives him his true Value is Government, or that which knits him to his People, and his Peo-

ple to him, ſo that they become one Body united together, He as Head, they as Members; He influencing and directing, they under Managery and Diſpoſal, and all this according to the Make and Frame of that particular Body, whereof He is the Head. Thus a King as Head, is in value anſwerable to the whole Body, becauſe all the Parts in their activities receive Influence and Direction from him. It is the Head that ſees dangers and advantages; and accordingly gives order to the Foot to move forward or backward; without ſuch Notices and Influences the whole cannot be preſerved, each part muſt loſe its Activities, and all the Advantages it hath in the preſent State of being. Upon this account it is, that the Arm puts up it ſelf, to ſuffer, to bear, to receive the impending blow, which was deſign'd againſt the Head, becauſe by the Preſervation of that, the whole is ſecured. Thus a King as Head influencing the whole, is in value as great as all the People. But if we put the Caſe either in Body natural, or Body politick, that all influences from the Head are intercepted, and no direction comes to the Members from it, then each part begins to have a value of its own, which may be as much or greater than that of the Head: for it is the uſefulneſs that gives the true value to the Head; for whilſt all the Senſes are with it, and all the Nerves and Muſcles are under the Managery of it, if theſe be directed according to their natural Activities, infinite are the Benefits that come from the government of the Head. But if the natural Head could be capable of taking a froward *Capricio* againſt the Body, and would not permit the Eyes to be open, or the Ears to hear, or the Mouth to receive in nouriſhment, or the Nerves to move the parts, or would contrive to do theſe things not in the ways and methods of Nature, but by appointments of its own; as ſuppoſe it ſhould cut off the joynts of the Fingers and Toes, of the Arms, Legs and Thighs, and faſten them again with Wires, inſtead of Nerves; in this Caſe the Head could not effectually influence thoſe parts as formerly, nor could they be alike plyant to the directions of the Head

Head, and so the Head would be less useful to the whole, and consequently of less value in it self. Now perhaps such a *Capricio* never entred into a Head natural, but politick Heads have often acted in similar ways to it; They have slighted the proper Conveyances, whereby, according to the Frame of establish'd Governments, the effects of their Power should descend down to the People, and set up new ways and methods of their own Contrivance, and have taken upon them to rule by Will and Humor and Project, without and against the Laws of the established Government, and it may be against their own Oaths, whereby they have nulled the mutual Trusts that should be between King and People, and broken the Bonds that naturally unite one to the other, whereby they become one Body politick, and so they have made themselves useless to the People, and the People to them. In such a Case whatever the Title is, yet the true value of the King necessarily decreases, and he becomes not answerable in value to the whole People. But if there happens to be a Separation of one from the other, either by Death, or manifest Abrenunciation, or Abdication, or plenary Dereliction; or if it be a subitary Dereliction: but such a one as leaves the People bereft of Law and Justice, without Provisions for their Security, and without sufficient Ground of hope that upon his return he will lay aside his mischievous Project of governing according to Pleasure, but will let the Influences of Regal Power descend to the People in the regular and avowed ways which the Laws of the established Government require. In these Cases as the People are without a King, so they must have another in his stead who must be substituted in the same way that the other was instituted; that is, by creating mutual Trusts in one another, which only can effectually and solemnly be done, by giving and taking mutual Oaths to and from one another.

X. If they can contract with another so as to become his People, and he their King, they may then take Oaths to Him. For if the Oaths which K. *James* took to them, and they to

him, did not inſeparably joyn them together ſo that he muſt as long as he lives remain their King, and they his People; inaſmuch as notwithſtanding thoſe Oaths he may, if he will, renounce, and abdicate, and entirely deſert the Government; and upon ſuch Renunciation, Abdication, and plenary Deſertion, they no longer are or can be his People. From hence it muſt follow that in certain Caſes there may be a ſeparation of King from People, and ſo of People from King, notwithſtanding their Oaths mutually taken and given to one another; and then the People muſt be at Liberty to become Subjects to another, and by new Oaths to ſecure Him of their Fidelity, without which they can never become a People, or Body Politick. Therefore in ſuch a Caſe they may take new Oaths, and the preſent circumſtances of our Affairs will make ſuch a Caſe, if the premiſes be true.

All this is true, but yet ſome will not allow it, becauſe they are under an opinion, that the Subjects are tyed faſter by their Oaths to the King, than the King is by his to them, and conſequently they think that if a King ſhould imprudently or raſhly deſert his People, yet He may at pleaſure reaſſume the Government over them, and require them to return to their obedience, and the duty of Subjects; becauſe he had a Title to the Regal power, and an Eſtate cannot be forfeited by a Miſtake, or act of Imprudence.

Now this Opinion is altogether groundleſs, it has no foundation from the nature of Oaths, and is contrary to the nature of Truth; and whereas all the high Perogatives of Kings ſuppoſe the good of the Community, this without reaſon deprives it of all poſſible means of Safety.

XI. They ought to take the Oaths, becauſe thereby they will get again into a ſtate of Government, become a People, have the benefit of Laws, be ſecured from Violence, and Wrong; All theſe they muſt deſire and endeavour after; it is not onely their Intereſt, but Duty to do it. And without Oaths which only can beget mutual truſts, and ſo create a ſufficient power,

none

none of those things can be secured. And why should they not do it? as they love their Lives, their Liberties, their Properties, their Religion, the publick good, and the good of the Community, they must be inclined to do it. For all those must be given over as lost, if ever K. *James* can have sufficient power to execute his Will. Once he manifestly and notoriously designed the Subversion of all these, and there is not the least argument, that he either has, or is in the least likelihood to change his purposes. There is nothing can stop men from acting in such a Case as this, but a clear Conviction that the thing to be done is sinful and wicked. Now it is hard to think, what Sin it can be, to make use of necessary means, at a fair opportunity, which is put into their hands, without their seeking, to preserve their Lives, their Liberties, their Religion, the general good of the Community. But yet this seems to be a Sin because thereby K. *James* may lose his Rights, that to which he was born, and ought to have by the Law, from whence by force he is outed, and cannot recover without the assistance of his People. To this is answered, That if K. *James* kept to Law, and had been contented with the Rights which he had by Law, he could never have been outed; but if he stretches his power beyond the Law, and depends upon *Force* to support that power, he may by force lose his own, and he has none to blame but himself for invading the Rights of others. Law cannot help him, nor can He have advantage from Lawful Oaths, or Oaths prescribed his Subjects by Law, to require their assistance in his Invasions against Law. It is true, the King has Rights by Law, and the Subject is bound to assist him in the defence of those Rights; and it is true too that the Subject has Rights by Law, and every one of them is bound by Nature, and Reason according to Law to preserve their own Rights. Now if a King invades the Rights of his Subjects, and takes from them the benefit of Legal defence of those Rights, in such a Case as this, if they do not resist, and oppose force to force, they must be said to comply with the Doctrine of Passive Obedience in a high-

high Degree. But if in such a time a Neighbor Prince wars against this King, and outs him of his power, may not the People be willing to receive those Rights which they ought to have had by Law, or are they bound to neglect their own rights which they ought to have by Law, and endeavor to recover the Kings power of doing what he will, as well against Law, as according to Law. In this Case it is certain that men may, and will, and in reason ought to provide for themselves, because here the good of the Community is on their side, which in other Cases is involved in the King, and speaks for him: for wehn he acts without that, and to the detriment of that, men cannot be for him against themselves.

Therefore it must be concluded, that it is not the People, but the King that brings this mischief upon himself, and if he does lose his own by endeavoring to get more than his own, it is his own Fault, not the Peoples Sin.

Here two things are well to be weighed. First, That there is a great deal of difference between obedience to the Laws of a King, and obedience to the Will of a King; and consequently a great deal of difference between assistances to him in the one Case, and assistances to him in the other. Obedience to his Law is necessary, but obedience to his Will and Pleasure is not. It is the fault, and a Sin in Subjects, if they do not obey, and assist him in the Execution of Law; But it may be a fault, and sin to obey, and assist him in the Execution of his Will. In the one Case a man deserves to be hanged, if he does not assist, and in the other he may deserve to be hanged, if he does; where there is so high a Punishment justly awarded to an Action, that Action cannot be a Duty; and the omission of it cannot be a Sin. Now if the present case be such, That the People of *England* have no grounds not to think that K. *James* requires their assistance to inable him to carry on his former purposes of subverting the Law, the Religion, the Rights, the Liberties of the People, and of making himself absolute Lord of all, and his People mere Slaves; in this Case they cannot be

bound

bound to assist him, because they are bound by Law not to assist him; and each one that serves to those purposes does as much deserve to be hanged, as a false Judge does, who in compliance with the Kings Command against Law takes away the Lives, and Estates of the People.

Secondly, There is a great deal of difference between the assistances that are to be given to a King whilst he continues the Government, and keeps up the Course of Laws, and the Forms of Justice; and the assistances that are to be given him after Desertion, when the Government is down, and the People are left in a miserable Condition without Law and Justice, without Support and Defence. In the first case the People are bound not onely not to resist in many things that are hard and grievous; but to assist a King in the doing of many things that may be doubtful, perhaps not so well, and perhaps ill, perhaps without Law, and perhaps against Law; but such as they in their private judgments may think to be warranted by Regal Rights, or the Kings Prerogative; or perhaps they may think the King wiser than themselves, and he may design the publick Good, though he stretches somewhat beyond his Power. Now in these Cases many things may be done amiss, yet the keeping up of Government, and the continuance of the Forms of Law and Justice, are so much for the good of the Community, that it may be accounted a Compensation for those Ills; and at least excuse, if not require such Assistances.

But if a Government be broken up, and the People by the withdrawing of the King are left without any Provisions for Law and Justice, destitute of all Helps and Supports for their defence against Wrong and Violence; in this Case if their former King require their Assistances, they are free to consider, and they are bound to understand, upon what account they are to give it. For if He should design to use their Assistance to ill purposes, to kill or rob the People, to deprive them of their Estates, to subvert the Constitution of the Government, or the established *Protestant Religion*; if he should by their

Help

Help inſlave this Nation, bring in Popery and Arbitrary Government; they themſelves are accountable to God and their Country, for all the Miſchiefs that he may do by their means, and with their Aſſiſtances: Here they have nothing to plead in excuſe for their Actions from the good of the Community, becauſe that is not provided for, but they themſelves are anſwerable for every thing they do, without, or againſt Law, and they are at leaſt as guilty Inſtruments of Rage and Violence, as any Miniſter of State can be, who in times of Peace, in complyance with a Kings Will does moſt unjuſtly kill and ſpoil the People.

Theſe things well conſidered, it will eaſily appear, That it cannot be the Peoples Sin, if K. *James* ſhould loſe his Rights for want of their Aſſiſtance. Becauſe in the preſent Circumſtances they are no more obliged to aſſiſt Him, than they would have been to aſſiſt a Fellow-ſubject againſt an injurious and tyrannical Act of his, whilſt he kept up Government. In that Caſe the good of the Community, and the great Benefit which every one receives from Government, might well oblige a calamitous Perſon to paſſive Obedience, or to be content to ſuffer wrongfully; and it might well oblige all others not to tumultuate or to diſturb the publick Weal for the regaining of his Right. In both Caſes men are obliged to Pity and Charity, but not to Aſſiſtances with Force of Arms, becauſe the Good of the Community in both Caſes are alike againſt ſuch Actions. For the late K. *James* having left the People without proviſion for Law and Juſtice, and without Government; is now as much deſtitute of any Plea from thence, as the injur'd Subject ever was: and he that now acts in his behalf, has no Security that he does not act againſt great and important Duties; all that which he owes to his Country, his People, his Religion, his God; he is not ſecured but that he acts for Will, againſt Law; for Tyranny againſt Juſtice; for Idolatry, againſt Chriſtianity; to pull down Truth, and to ſet up a Lye, a Cheat the moſt

moſt impudent that ever was, which has always advanced it ſelf by Inſolence and Cruelty, without Regard to the Law of God, or Man.

He that thinks of theſe things may well allow himſelf time to conſider before he undertakes to Act. And he that does ſo, will ſoon find that there is a vaſt difference between Paſſive Obedience, and Active Aſſiſtances; For tho a Man may, and is bound to ſuffer wrongfully for his Conſcience, and for his Religion, from an ill Maſter, an ill Governor, or an ill King, as St. *Peter* intimates 1. *Pet.* 2. 19. yet he is not bound to aſſiſt, to fight for, to ſupport him in the doing thoſe ill things. S. *Paul Rom.* 13. requires Chriſtians to be *Subject to the higher Powers, not to reſiſt the power*, to look upon him who beareth the Sword as a *Miniſter of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.* By thoſe injunctions he obligeth them to Paſſive Obedience, not to tumultuate, not to diſturb Government, but to live peaceably and quietly, whether the higher Powers were good or bad men, and that too whether they had good or bad Titles to thoſe Powers; for that was for their own Good, and for the Good of the Community. Therefore he exhorts them further, 1. *Tim.* 2. 2. *to pray for Kings, and all that are in Authority*; that is, whether they be good or bad Men, whether they had good or bad Titles; for this end: *That they might lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all Godlineſs and Honeſty*; that is, becauſe this tended to their own Good, and the Good of the Community. *Nero* who then was the *higheſt Power*, and bore the Sword, was certainly a very bad Man; and he had no Title to the Power, for he got the poſſeſſion againſt the Right of the true Heir, by a ſeaſonable poyſoning of *Claudius* his Anteceſſor; yet he being in Poſſeſſion, the Chriſtians are commanded to ſubmit, and be ſubject, not to reſiſt, but to pray for him. This will not be eaſily thought to have been required in Favour of Him, or for *his ſake*, but for the reaſon which St. *Paul* gives,

that the Chriſtians who were under his Power might *lead peaceable and quiet lives*, in the Profeſſion, and Practice of their Religion, or *in all Godlineſs and Honeſty.*

Thus far then, and upon this accompt it may be granted that Chriſtians are obliged to be ſubject, not to reſiſt, to pray for Emperors and Kings; ſo that we keep in mind, that all theſe Duties refer to them, as they are *Powers*, as they *bear the Sword*, as they are in *Authority*; that is, as they keep up Rule, and Order, and Government, amongſt the Societies of Men. But if it ſhould happen that any ſuch a one, either Emperor or King, ſhould lay aſide his *Power*, throw away his *Sword*, make himſelf uncapable of *executing Wrath upon evil doers*, *be not in Authority*, but ſo far out of it, that he cannot contribute toward their *leading a peaceable and quiet life*; if he withdraw ſo from Government, that he leaves the People without benefit of Law and Juſtice; in theſe Caſes, there is nothing in thoſe Texts that refer to *Him*, nothing that obliges the People either to paſſive Obedience, or any other Duty in reſpect of *Him.*

So much for the underſtanding the Nature of and the Obligation to Paſſive Obedience; it is a Duty incumbent upon Chriſtians in certain Caſes, for certain ends and purpoſes.

But as to Active Aſſiſtances by fighting and warring for one Pretender againſt another, or in behalf of a right Title to a Crown againſt a bad one, Scripture gives no directions, lays no duty upon Chriſtians, but leaves them to the Laws of their ſeveral Countrys, to the Obligations they are under in Civil Societies.

Suppoſe that *Nero* at the coming of *Galba*, had eſcaped Death, and withdrawn out of the Territories of the Empire, and left the People, juſt as K. *James* did, without making any Proviſion for Law and Juſtice; would the Chriſtians then, by Virtue of their Chriſtianity, have been obliged to take up Arms in his behalf, to recover his Rights, and reſettle him in the *Power*? What Text can be cited for ſuch

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a Duty as this? St. *Paul* bleſſes God that he was once *delivered from the mouth of this Lyon*; and muſt ſucceeding Chriſtians after his Death and cruel Martyrdom, be obliged to offer themſelves to that Mouth? muſt they inable him to crantch and tear in pieces as many as he pleaſes, and execute all the direful effects of his Rage and Fury. This is againſt Humanity, and cannot be a Chriſtian Doctrine; it was certainly enough for ſome of them to ſubmit, and ſuffer wrongfully, and perform all the Duties of a Paſſive Obedience, whilſt others under his Government might perhaps *live peaceable and quiet lives*, or elſe received ſome Benefits of the uſual Forms of Law. Whatever more than this they might have done in his behalf, had been more than their Duty, as they were Chriſtians; and if they had prevailed for his Reſtoration, they muſt have looked upon themſelves, as the Cauſes of all the Miſchiefs and Outrages which he would have committed.

But ſuppoſe another Caſe a little nearer to the preſent Circumſtances, and perhaps may hit the Thoughts of ſome particular Perſons. What if *Diocleſian* had reaſſumed the *Purple*, and redemanded the Imperial Throne, which he had not legally and formally renounced, or abdicated: If he had done this after that time, when *Conſtantine* was in poſſeſſion of the *Power*, and had declared himſelf a Chriſtian, and reſolved to ſupport Chriſtianity; I ſay what if he, or his Friends at that time had made their Argument, and ſent abroad this Plea in his behalf? That he was once Emperor, owned and acknowledged as ſuch, in full exerciſe of the *Power*, he had never Demiſed, or Abdicated, or Deſerted the Government; (for ſo his Colleague *Maximianus Herculeus* really thought, and did actually reaſſume, and perſuaded *Diocleſian* to do the ſame) he had withrawn indeed, and ſtept aſide to his Gardens at *Salonæ*, to ſee how his Cabbages thrived; to take care that they were well ordered, ſo that they might live and grow, and become at length great according to his Wiſhes; but he is now returned, and demands his former Rights, and expects that the People ſhould come in to his Aſſiſtance.

Here the Query is, what the Chriſtians would and what they ought to do? And what can we think? Would they leave their *Conſtantine*, their deareſt Friend, their Brother Chriſtian, their *Deliverer*; the greateſt Bleſſing that God had ever given to the Chriſtian Name; one that freed 'em from Slavery and Miſery, from the Racks and Gibbets by which other Chriſtians had formerly ſuffered, and were then anew deſigned againſt them, and actually preparing for them? One who had ſecured to them the common Rights of Liberties and Properties, which by Law they ought to have; and which others were complotting injuriouſly, by Force and Violence to ſnatch from them? What can we think? That *Diocleſian* their Enemy, a known Perſecutor, a furious Deſigner againſt themſelves, their Lives, their Religion, might be able to execute all the miſchievous purpoſes, which he or the naughty People about him might contrive? He that can think that the Chriſtians would have done this, he muſt have expreſs clear Texts to prove that this was their Duty; or elſe he muſt think that they were mere Bedlams, and Mad Men. And when he has done that, he muſt conclude too, that God the Father had reſolved, that his Son Chriſt ſhould never have a Kingdom in this World, to be ſure not that which is promiſed to be *ſet upon a Hill*, unto which *all Nations might reſort*; but that he had predeſtinated Chriſtians not only to a Purgatory, but a Hell in this World, from whence there is no Redemption: For if they muſt chooſe Miſery, when they have the greateſt Appearances poſſible, that he by his Providence, works moſt effectually for their delivery, then they muſt be miſerable without hope of Recovery.

Many more things might be added to ſhew that the Chriſtians Duty and Intereſt go the ſame way in this, and ſuch like Caſes; but it belongs to the Adverſary, if there be any ſuch, to prove Chriſtians under duty by Chriſts Law to give Active Aſſiſtances either to *Nero*, or *Diocleſian*, or any like them, for the recovery of their Rights after they

they have withdrawn from the Government, and left the Community without any benefit of Protection, and Defence from them. It was enough for them to be ſubmitted unto, to be not reſiſted whilſt they were the *powers*, and bore the Sword. And it was enough for the Chriſtians to be under Paſſive Obedience all that time, and they were ſufficiently exerciſed with it. Beyond this it is not conceivable that God would lay any farther Duty upon them. He might as well command them to put Swords into mad-mens hands, as oft as they find them diſarmed; He may as well command them to hang themſelves for the ſport of Fools; for it is much the ſame thing to aſſiſt thoſe in the regaining of loſt power, who will certainly rack, hang, and gibbet them.

No publick Good, no true Right of Princes, no Intereſt of Religion can be forced to ſpeak one word in this Caſe, tho each of them moſt apparently and ſtrongly plead for the Duty of Paſſive Obedience.

It is not for the Publick Good to favor the Cauſe of fierce, violent, heady, bold preſumptuous men, or of thoſe that ſet up their own wills and humours againſt Law, and Juſtice. Whilſt they are Powers, the publick Good requires that we ſhould ſuffer 'em, and ſuffer for them.

But if they diveſt themſelves of Power, whether with deſign, or by miſtake, their Cauſe is not favorable, the Publick Good is no way concerned for them, if it be not for the avoidance of a greater Evil. If they be catched with a Why-not, who can help it? if they will go, none are bound to fetch them back, their Rights as they are Princes do not require it; and there is no Vertue, no point of Religion that does oblige men to it.

I have been long in this point on purpoſe to free mens thoughts from Confuſion and Miſtake, that they may ſee what vaſt difference there is betwixt the Duty of Paſſive Obedience and the falſe plea's for Active Aſſiſtances.

I ſhall end this by hinting a known Apologue, which ſeems to ſpeak clearly common Senſe, and Reaſon, and may help the apprehenſions of ſome Men.

It is ſaid, that a fierce wild Beaſt was catched in a ſnare, and there held till he was almoſt famiſhed; a man paſſing by, the Beaſt beſeeches him to unty, and looſe his bonds, and ſet him at Liberty, and for that favour promiſes Amity, and perpetual Friendſhip: the man complies, and the Beaſt is freed. He muſt live by prey, and ſince he had no other to ſupply his neceſſities, he muſt prey upon *him*. The man pleads his merits, that he had ſaved the Beaſt's life, and therefore ought not to loſe his own for it. The Beaſt alledges preſent Urgences and inſuperable Neceſſities. Whilſt they are high in this altercation, they are both cited to the Lyons Den, and the Fox is appointed to hear, and decide the Controverſie betwixt them. Upon hearing, he finds there is much in the Mans Plea, and much in the Beaſts, and would not poſitively determine againſt either. But that he might judge fairly, and equitably, at laſt he fix'd upon this Expedient. That all things ſhould be put into the ſame ſtate wherein they were before the Controverſie began. Let the Beaſt, ſays he, be put into the ſnare again, and let the Man paſs by him again, and if at the requeſt of the Beaſt the Man think good to looſe him again, let the Beaſt e'en devour him if he will.

FINIS.